CHOPIN

12 ÉTUDES

Op. 10

STUDENT'S EDITION

BY

ALFRED CORTOT

TRANSLATED BY

M. PARKINSON

EDITIONS SALABERT

575 Madison Avenue
New York

22, rue Chauchat
Paris

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> Study, not only the difficult passage but the difficulty itself reduced to its most elementary principles.
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STUDY N° 1

(Op. 10)

While practising this Study, *the student should concentrate especially on:* strength of the fingers — improving the stretch of the hand. Authority and spirit.

First difficulty to overcome: Stretch and firmness in shifting the hand over nearly the whole length of the keyboard.

First of all, obtain a correct position of the hand, and firmness of attack by the following exercise adapted to every figure of two bars :

N° 1.

Avoid deflecting the hand towards the little finger; repeat each passage *forte* and in a moderate tempo : five times with heavy staccato of the forearm, the wrist remaining supple – and five times perfectly legato (insomuch as the wide stretch separating the two farthest notes will allow).

Further, practise the following figures which apply to the whole study :

N° 2. — *simile* — *simile*

5 times : staccato *f* - the fingers firm and preparing the chord before striking it, wrist and forearm supple, force given by the weight of the and.

N° 3.

5 times : slurred, the 4th and 5th finger attacking boldly.

N° 4.

5 times : staccato *mf* light but precise attack; thumb, 2nd et 4th fingers carefully preparing the striking of the chord

Then, concentrating on the stretching and special practise of the thumb by which exercise the required legato will be obtained :

N° 5. — *etc.* — *etc.*

N° 6. — *etc.* — *etc.*

N° 7. — *etc.* — *etc.*

N° 8. — *etc.* — *etc.*

In these last two exercises, place the thumb immediately over the note to be played and, at the same time, let the fingers remain firmly on their respective keys.

In figure N° 8, the 4th finger passes immediately over the 5th which serves as a pivot when the hand is shifted upwards; when the hand is shifted downwards, the 2nd finger passes immediately over the thumb, grazing the keyboard with a quick lateral motion.

M.S.& Cie 5004 A

Repeat 4 times each of the figures 5, 6, 7, 8; the first and second time slowly, then quickening the tempo but playing *forte* and perfectly legato.

Second difficulty to overcome : Evenness of tone-value and individual strength of each finger; fluency and firmness; perfect legato.

No 9. Play this 5 times *f*, gradually quickening the tempo.

No 10. Play 10 times, taking care to give the due accent while avoiding any motion of the hand : from *mf* to *f*, slowly.

No 11. 5 times, lightly and in a rather quick tempo, but always legato.

Further, practise with the following rhythms, in moderate tempo and always *f* < *ff* > *f*.

No 12. 5 times

No 13. 5 times

No 14. 5 times

No 15. 5 times

The hand should remain very firm on every long note, and the fingers that play the demisemiquavers should continue to articulate neatly, nevertheless without being raised too far back from the keyboard.

Avoid « rolling » the fingers in practising this exercise.

When the preparatory practice has thus been gone through for every figure of two bars, of which this Study is composed, – excepting bars 42, 43, and 44, which should be played in the following manner :

that is to say, by extending this figure to a wider range of the keyboard, – the performance of the whole Study should be attempted, by playing it throughout five times, the first time *f* and slowly : the second time slowly still but *p* — not disregarding the dynamics which should be suggested rather than actually played; the third time *f* again without nuances but in quick tempo; the fourth time slowly, with dynamics exactly observed – its real values a trifle exaggerated even; and the fifth time in the real tempo, with the dynamics, impulse and spirit required to achieve a first-class interpretation of this piece.

Carefully avoid overstrain from practising the exercises too long. This remark applies, by the way, to the practice of all the passages containing stretches. Frequently interrupt this kind of exercise by others of held notes, such as :

or other similar figures.

played preferably *p* and *mf*; this, by replacing the fingers in their normal position, will secure the balance necessary to a methodical development of the muscles of the hand.

It will prove excellent practice when once the Study is thoroughly perfected, to play it slowly, transposing it in *every key while keeping the fingerings of key C.*

ALFRED CORTOT

12 STUDIES

(Op. 10)

dedicated to Franz LISZT

Fr. CHOPIN

STUDY N° 1

Allegro (♩=176)

legato

(2 min. 20)

f

Ped. the bass always sonorous and well sustained.

simile

f

mp

mf espressivo

cresc.

f

(A) (B) (C)

A) The use of the following fingerings [Bar 22, Bar 31, Bar 64] is not admissible when performing; indeed, by altering the position of the hand, we necessarily alter the tone-value of the passage. But this exercise will be useful for practising the passing under of the thumb and can profitably be applied to the whole Study. *Ex.*

B). It is possible that the short range of usual keyboards in Chopin's time explains why he did not write :

Bar 25 Bar 26

C). In certain editions, the following figure is used for the last beat of bar 29.

(*). See remark A, P. 10.

più f

ff

D). Here a slight vibrato of the pedal will secure the 32-foot sonority of the organ for this final note.

STUDY N° 2
(Op. 10)

The student should concentrate on: Independance and even playing of the weaker fingers (3rd, 4th, 5th) – improvement of the legato action. Correct position of the hand. Lightness. Dexterity.

Difficulties to overcome: Crossing of 3rd, 4th and 5th fingers. Strain resulting from the continuous action of the said fingers. Divided muscular action of the hand into two elements, one playing the predominant part, the other merely the accompaniment.

A. Active element.
B. Accompanying element.

First, in order to acquire a perfect legato in the riding movement of one finger over another, practise the following exercises :

N° 1.

A. 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 etc. — 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 etc.
B. 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 etc. — 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 etc.
C. 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 etc. — 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 etc.
D. 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 etc. — 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 5 etc.

that will be played first with a slight accent on the first note of every triplet (but with the finger only – the hand having no part in it), next quite evenly without accent.

Repeat 4 times each of the above fingerings *p* and in a slow tempo. The crossing of a lower finger either „ over " or „ under " an upper one (3rd-4th, or 4th-5th) should be prepared according to the principle of an absolute legato; consequently, avoid any exaggerated raising of the fingers, or contraction or stiffness of the wrist, and be careful that the fingers not playing should remain completely relaxed.

Further, practise in the same manner, with a fingering of three, thus :

N° 2.

A. 3 4 5 3 4 5 3 4 5 3 4 5 3 etc. — 3 5 4 3 5 4 3 5 4 3 5 4 3 etc.
B. 4 5 3 4 5 3 4 5 3 4 5 3 4 etc. — 4 3 5 4 3 5 4 3 5 4 3 5 4 etc.
C. 5 3 4 5 3 4 5 3 4 5 3 4 5 etc. — 5 4 3 5 4 3 5 4 3 5 4 3 5 etc.

with rhythm in groups of 4, then without marking the rhythm, twice both formulae.

When the student has become quite conversant with these exercises and can play the different fingerings chromatically with ease – without unevenness, and observing perfect steadiness of the hand, his fingers rather gliding over the keys than actually striking them – he will start practising the upper part of the Study and its particular fingering.

To set down this fingering, we have considered which position of the fingers most favours the independence of the muscles when striking the chords, i.e. in most cases the position will be : instead of ... instead of ...

by which we obtain a greater evenness of playing. In the case, however, when individual structure of the hand will not allow this formula to be adopted exclusively, modifications in some detail or other may be introduced by the performer provided these modifications shall be strictly set down and not left to chance fingerings.

First, practise the upper part *alone*, without chords, according to the following rhythms with the fingering adopted.

N° 3. etc. **N° 4.** etc. **N° 5.** etc. **N° 6.** etc.

Repeat 5 times each figure of four bars with each of the above rhythmic formulae, accenting with the finger only – the hand remaining perfectly still.

Then, practise the whole upper part of the Study as it is written (without chords or accents), gradually quickening the tempo, in such a way as to impart to the performance the gliding and vaporous character which must remain unaltered when the chords are added later. This preparatory work being perfected and the strength and evenness of the 3rd, 4th and 5th finger definitely acquired, then – and then only – practise the chords.

Great care should be taken in always considering the two notes played by the thumb and forefinger as a „ pizzicato " accompaniment harmonizing with the light tone of the bass, and not as a mainstay for the upper fingers. They really should be written :

etc.

and they should be plucked rather than struck.

First, practise in this way :

Nº 7.

etc.

with very quick motion of the fingers alone, the hand remaining motionless. Then :

Nº 8.

etc.

Then, once more by figures of four bars, slowly, the upper part very evenly, the chords terse and precise :

Nº 9.

etc. repeat each figure 4 times.

And, in order to secure entire steadiness of the hand and the exclusive action the fingers :

Nº 10.

etc. repeat each figure 5 times.

the upper finger staccato very pronounced, the chords played almost as if gliding from one to the other (this exercise to be practised *f* in a moderate tempo).

Further, the following exercises :

Nº 11.

etc.

which should be practised likewise by figures of four bars and repeated 5 times slowly *mf*.

After which, the Study should be played throughout, 3 times in succession with the addition of the bass first slowly, then quicker, finally in the proper tempo – and, needless to say, *piano* throughout, observing however the slight „ crescendi " and „ decrescendi " which impart to this Study its aerial character.

The following is an excellent preparatory exercise for legato playing of octaves in general ; it may be applied to both hands using for the upper part of the right hand, the fingerings adopted for the present Study.

5 3 4 5 4 5 3 4 5

etc.

etc.

5 4 5 4 3 5 4 5 4

STUDY Nº 2

(Op. 10)

Allegro (♩ = 144)

sempre legato

(1 min. 35)

p *cresc.*

(A) Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

sempre legato

p *cresc.*

Ped. *simile*

dim. *fz*

Ped. *

A). On a full-tone piano it will prove to advantage to use the « una corda » pedal ; with very light and moderate use of the sustaining pedal.

cresc.

p

8

cresc.

dim.

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

A). We recommend a rapid vibratory pressure of the sustaining pedal on this held note, as well as for the last 3 bars of the Study.

sempre legato

p

cresc.

f

sempre legato

cresc.

Ped. ※

Ped. ※

dim.

pp

STUDY N° 3
(Op. 10)

The student should concentrate on: Improving both the polyphonic (individual tone-value of the fingers) and legato playing – Expressive merging of the rubato tempo with the musical phrasing – Development of extension – Melodic use of the pedal.

Difficulties to overcome: Intense expressiveness imparted by the weaker fingers and the particular position of the hand arising therefrom. Legato by portamento (finger-substitution). Firmness of attack in striking the double notes when these are widely spaced.

The preparatory work will consist in appreciating correctly the two distinct muscular areas of the hand, each one responsible for a different intensity of tone. This exercise is somewhat similar to that recommended for Study Nº 2 (Op. 10). However, in the latter piece, the said exercise was set down in order to solve a technical problem pertaining to one special composition. We meet here in this Study in E major with a dificulty of more general import. A judicious and rational study of it will further help to interpret with better understanding most of the expressive works of Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, Cesar Franck, and above all those of J.S. Bach.

A definite rule must be followed without fail while practising this polyphonic technique : i.e. the weight of the hand should lean towards the fingers which play the predominant musical part, and the muscles of the fingers playing an accessory part should be relaxed and remain limp.

Before commencing to practise the Study itself, improve the independence of each finger by the following exercises :

Nº 1. for the thumb

Nº 2. for the 2nd finger

Nº 3. for the 3rd finger

Nº 4. for the 4th finger

Nº 5. for the 5th finger

in the above exercises, the quavers shall always be played *f* and legato – intensity of tone imparted by *pressure* and not by attack. The semiquavers *p* alternately legato and staccato.

It will be observed, while practising the above formulae that legato of notes played in succession by the same finger can only be achieved by the portamento device, and that consequently this legato is really an illusion produced on the ear ; however, by playing in this manner, a sensation of perfect legato will be obtained provided each lowering of the key should bring forth an identical quality of tone. This principle will be the groundwork for interpreting such a number of expressive passages elsewhere that we insist upon the student not giving up the practise of the above-mentioned formulae – or that of others which he may have set down

himself – before he feels perfectly confident that he can physically control with precision the transmission of the weight of his hand (or even of his forearm) to either of his fingers, while the other part of his hand remains completely free and relaxed.

To complete this preparatory work, practise the following exercises in order to master the passing of the weight of one finger to another :

No 6. etc.

No 7. etc.

No 8. etc.

Then, begin practising the first twenty bars of the Study to which – as well as to the last sixteen bars of same – this way of playing particularly applies :

No 9. *f sonorous, expressive and perfectly legato* *mp* *pp* etc.

Strength of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th fingers is obtained not by articulating, but by pressure. The thumb and 2nd finger should on the contrary, just touch the keys, not however without great precision. The 16th bar, for which musical design this exercise is not suitable, shall be played thus :

etc.

Repeat these twenty bars, 5 times in succession slowly and *listening intently* to the tone produced.
In case this exercise should not suffice to give the fingers the required independence, practise as follows :

No 10. *f* *p* etc.

We set down hereafter a few formulae for the following thirty bars :

(A) etc. etc.

the legato being obtained after each sixth by a flexible wrist movement, which, at the same time, by weighing more or less on the key will control more or less intensity of tone.

(B) *f* etc.

the thirds to be struck with a direct and simultaneous attack, and the articulation precise.
(C) First, make sure of the firm position of the hand :

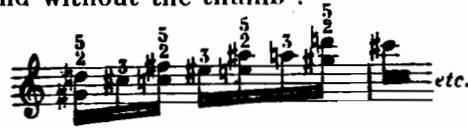
f 10 times slowly then quicker.

same exercise and the following to be applied to the left hand.

then :

10 times also quicker each time.

lifting the hand and forearm after each attack more than twenty cm. above the keyboard, and striking very directly.

(D) First of all, practise the right hand without the thumb :

perfectly legato, slightly pushing the hand up the keyboard, and keeping very close to the keys.

Same work for the left hand :

then, the passage as it is written, with the following rhythms :

(E) In order to obtain precision and vigour of attack, practise thus :

etc giving much strength to the 5th finger then :

(F) First : ... then ...

then : ... then : ... and :

Strike with hand well raised, practising slowly and *f* as in example **C**; same formulae for the left hand. Then, practise the passage as it is written, raising the hand high between each group.

(G) In spite of an apparent return to calm which prevails from here on until the initial theme is introduced again, the interpretation of these eight bars should nevertheless retain something of a prolonged quivering like that of some exalted mood subsiding only by degrees.

The rubato tempo maintained thoughout the Study must moreover never be either fitfully marked or exaggerated in any way. Indeed it should follow faithfully the natural quickening or slowing of declamation which sometimes lingers through emotion, and at other times is sped on by eagerness.

As to the pedal, like in most compositions of similar nature, it should be used almost exclusively for bringing out the melodic line.

Consequently, avoid using it in an elementary manner, extending it over whole harmonic groups; it should, on the contrary, be changed frequently, and the intervals necessary to lift it between beats should be as short as possible.

Only by using the pedal frequently and deftly will the performer be able to obtain that clarity of tone which is required to give the melodic line full opportunity for limpid play against a shrouded background.

It will be observed that for the first bars of this Study – as well as for Study Nº 6 (Op. 10) – the use of the *una corda* pedal added to that of the sustaining pedal will give more expressive colouring to the tone, as it will help towards imparting more accent to the melodic line, while not impairing the character of intensity which is the general shade of the composition.

ALFRED CORTOT

(*) **Use the pedal on every semiquaver.**

Rit.
legatissimo
cresc.
sf
mp
dim.
smorz.
poco rall.
a Tempo
p
poco cresc.
cresc. stretto
cresc.
rit. a Tempo
f
dim.
pp
Rall.
smorz.
ppp

STUDY N° 4
(Op. 10)

The student should concentrate on : Evenness of finger-touch in both hands – Velocity – Brio.

Difficulties to overcome : Regularity and briskness of attack, the position of the hand being alternately with, fingers close together or widespread. Perfect balance of tone in passing from one position to the other. Use of thumb on the black keys. Legato in a quick tempo.

The exercises preparatory to this work will be devoted to melodic figures 1° in conjunct motion; 2° in disjunct motion.

Practise first in semitones :

N° 1. r.h. etc. etc.

l.h. (2 octaves lower)

Then, in whole tones :

N° 2. etc. etc.

l.h. in every key.

Practise hands separately with following rhythms :

Further, with equal values, alternately legato and in finger-staccato; *f* and *p*, avoiding all motion of the hand. The thumb should not droop under the hand, it should act in the same way as the other fingers.

The following exercise will prove profitable both as a transition from conjunct to disjunct motion, and also to obtain regularity of touch for the 3rd and 4th fingers.

N° 3. r.h. etc.

l.h. etc.

By practising the following exercises, the student will get familiar with widely-spread figures, and at the same time with the particular fingering allowing of their neat execution.

N° 4. r.h. etc. ten. ten. ten. etc.

l.h. (2 octaves lower).

Further, for the hand to achieve the ability to pass with rapidity and ease from the closed position to the widespread position :

N° 5. r.h. alone etc. etc.

Next, begin practising the Study by fragments of three or four bars, repeating 8 or 10 times rather *f*, with different rhythms. (See Exc. N° 2)

(1) The following is an excellent preparatory exercise for bar 2 :

Make the accent with the finger only. etc. etc. etc.

(2) Bar 3 ten. ten. etc.

These two formulae to be applied also to similar left hand passages.

Bar 6 *l.h.* etc.

For bars 25 and 26, see Study No 2 (Op. 10).

A. etc. raise the 4 th finger as high as possible,

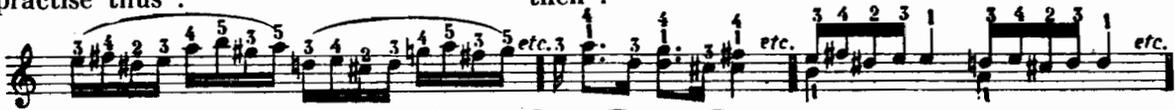
③ Bars 27 and 28

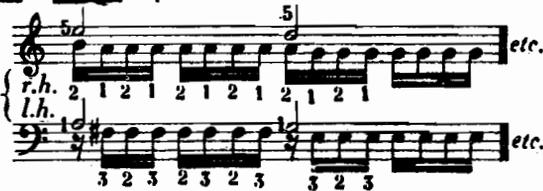
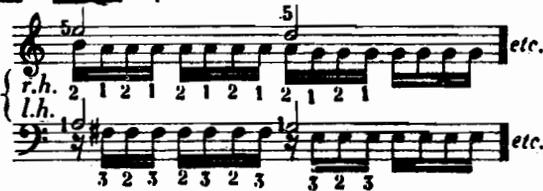
B. etc.

The easier version should not be countenanced as the particular practice required for this passage is extremely useful :

l.h. *l.h.* *l.h.* *l.h.*

④ First of all, practise thus : then : and :

Bars 29 and 30 etc. etc. etc.

then, with the rhythms :

⑤ Bars 31 and 32

A B etc. etc. C r.h. l.h. etc.

⑥ Bars 33, 34, 37 and 38 (to make sure of repeats) *l.h.* etc.

⑦ Bars 35, 36, 40 and 41 r.h. etc. etc.

then with the rhythms :

l.h. etc. etc. etc. etc.

⑧ Bar 47 A *l.h.* etc. B ten. ten. etc.

⑨ Bars 71 to 79. r.h. etc. etc.

(10) From bar 71 to bar 75, practise the left hand with exaggerated upward motion of the wrist.

⑪ Bars 75 to 78 *l.h.* etc etc.

⑫ Bars 79 and 80. r.h.

STUDY Nº 4

(Op. 10)

Presto (𝅗𝅥 = 88)

(2 min. 20)

f con fuoco

fp *cresc.*

f *fp* *cresc.*

fp

cresc.

ff *f*

mf

cresc. *f* *sf* *p*

legato

sempre f

cresc.

fz p *cresc.*

Ped. *

f *sf*

fp *cresc.*

fp

cresc.

ff

mf

cresc.

ff

fff

fz *ff con più fuoco possibile*

simile

ff

simile

ff

STUDY N° 5

(Op. 10)

The student should concentrate on : Ease, clarity and fluent action on the black keys. Brilliant and delicate legato -- so-called „ jeu perlé ".

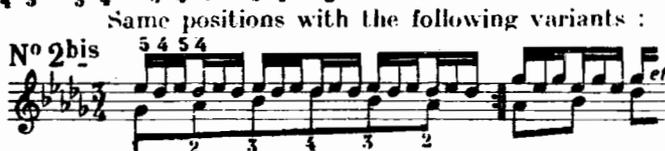
Particular difficulties : Suppleness while shifting the hand in order to facilitate even action of the fingers in disjunct positions. Even quality of tone wherever weaker and stronger fingers play in succession. Passing the thumb under on black keys.

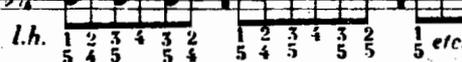
First of all, make sure that both hands have perfect control of the successions on the black keys, by practising the following exercises :

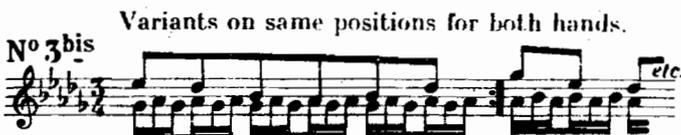
N° 1. Then on the following positions

the lef hand one octabe lower

N° 2.

Same positions with the following variants :

N° 2bis (For the left hand same fingerings as above)

N° 3.

Variants on same positions for both hands.

N° 3bis

Further, practise the following scales on the black keys, with the three fingerings set down hereafter !

N° 4.

Pay great attention to the passing under of the thumb and keep in mind that every attack of the thumb should be prepared carefully (See Study N° 8 Op. 10).

Then :

N° 5.

(accent with the finger only, alternately *f* and *p*, quicker each time).

Next, practise the double-note positions thus :

No 6 r.h. l.h. etc.

No 7 r.h. l.h. etc.

No 8 r.h. l.h. etc.

Exercises No 6 – 7 – 8 must be played legato (for the principles concerning double-note legato see Studies No 6 – 8 and 10 Op. 25); next, they should be played in broken chords, beginning alternately with the upper note, then with the lower, and in every position legato and finger staccato; avoid any unevenness due to passing under of the thumb. Use fingerings mentioned above.

Ex. No 6 bis and etc. No 7 bis and etc. No 8 bis and etc. Likewise with rhythms of three.

This manner of practising will prove the most profitable of all those we recommend to achieve a perfect execution of this Study, but full results will be derived from it only on condition that the foregoing formulae have been definitely mastered.

The preparatory practice should be completed by playing scales in octaves on the black keys, alternately staccato – using only the thumb and the 5th finger (for both hands) –; and then, legato with the following fingerings

r.h. l.h. etc.

and r.h. l.h. etc. Likewise in broken octaves. etc.

To practise the Study itself, play the figure of the right hand by fragments of four bars and repeat with the following rhythms :

then, likewise, alternately legato and staccato *p* and *f*. Further. practise two of these fragments in unbroken succession, then three, and so on, gradually making longer and longer passages to be played without interruption.

(1) Special practice for Bars 19 and 120.

ten. ten.

(2) Bars 27 and 28

A.

B. C.

(3) Bar 33 and following.

practise likewise the uppert part legato, the lower part staccato, and vice-versa.

(4) For the study of all positions similar to those from Bar 57 to the descending scale of Bar 65, we recommend the following formula :

This formula will help moreover – when performing – to achieve a slight thumb-accentuation and an easy, quick and brilliant action of the upper fingers. It will also, by preventing the thumb from drawing away from the note, secure a correct position of the hand : this being an essential rule to be kept in mind throughout the Study.

(5) Bars 75 and following

(6) Bars 79 and following.

Same passage. e

l.h.

In this Study, the bass should be practised separately and great care should be taken to attack distinctly and precisely.

Exercices for the first bar :

l.h. ten.

Bars 57 and 58.

and :

One of the most important points to be considered in this Study is the particular technical element of virtuosity, named „ jeu perlé " which indeed evokes a string of pearls being unthreaded one by one, i.e. notes played in succession with a perfect even tone. From the point of view of interpretation, to overlook this item would be as serious a fault as to play false notes or to shade incorrectly.

It is therefore imperious not to concentrate exclusively on pure velocity, but to confer to the latter harmony and grace, as if it were gifted with wings; thus it will become a musical factor and impart to this composition its real poetical character.

Carefully avoid all exaggerated raising of the fingers; the fingers, on the contrary, must keep close to the keys, almost in the position adopted for held notes. The wrist very flexible allowing the hand to shift easily. The right hand will, needless to say, be practised separately until the Study is learnt throughout.

Excellent technical improvement will be derived from transposing the Study into G major (same fingerings as for G flat).

ALFRED CORTOT

STUDY Nº 5
(Op. 10)

Vivace (𝅗𝅥 = 116)

(1 min. 30)

f brillante p legato sempre cresc.

f p

poco rall. pp a Tempo f p cresc.

f p cresc.

p cresc.

poco a poco cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

sempre legatissimo

ten

ten

dim.

(*) The use of the pedal marked here on each beat is necessary to obtain a light and fluid tone. It should be lifted and pressed down again practically without intervals.

poco rall.

pp delicato smorz.

p a Tempo

legato

poco cresc.

p

poco cresc.

f

ff

p

cresc.

ff

STUDY N° 6

(Op. 10)

The student should concentrate on : Perfecting polyphonic playing – Expressive intensity of tone – Legato.

Particular difficulties : Individual tone for each of the simultaneous melodic lines – Extension.

The feverish and concentrated character of this Study (too often played „ Adagio ", in spite of Chopin having marked it „ Andante " without further metronomic specification) does not admit of playing the figure in semiquavers either in a flavourless shade of „ piano " or a colourless legato which would reduce this figure to being only an accompaniment.

Below the passionate lament of the upper voice in the right hand, we must hear a vital lower part uniting with it yet not covering it, sustaining and strengthening the expressive character of the first while preserving its own timbre and its own freedom of rhythm.

Apart from a few wide stretches, the only real difficulties of this Study are balance and the independence of the double melodic line just mentioned – they will be achieved by attacking the notes differently according to the part concerned.

In the upper part, whose expressive power must predominate throughout, the tone must be produced by pressing (not striking) the keys to the full depth of the keyboard; with fingers practically straight and so firm as to serve as supports to the hand, whose full weight must be used.

The fingers playing the figure in semiquavers should have a more independent individual action.

A useful method of practice in the early stages is to let each key that has been played come slowly up again without losing contact with the finger, before playing the next note. By this means, a non-legato will be obtained which, though not at all suitable when performing, will ensure accuracy, even action of the fingers and prepare the final legato.

For the latter, bring the weight of the hand to bear slightly on each semiquaver : a kind of portamento will be obtained almost imperceptible but sufficiently marked however to impart to the tone produced a peculiar quality, a timbre that will prevent it from merging into the upper melodic line though remaining closely-connected with it.

In order to get accustomed to the special attack required for the figure in semiquavers (and more particularly for the left hand), we recommend the following exercise :

etc.

which, by compelling the finger to release the key in order to attack the same note over again, will train it for the releasing movement mentioned above.

In the second part, which is of a less reserved character (i.e. from Bar 17 to Bar 41), the right hand must be practised according to the principles set down for Study N° 3 Op. 10, that is to say, with the weight of the hand applied to the region playing the principal design, the design in semiquavers continuing in the character originally created by the left hand.

To avoid strain resulting from a prolonged practice of extended hand-positions (from Bar 17 until the theme is introduced again), we recommend the following preliminary exercise :

r.h. etc.

l.h. etc.

to be practised in every key.

Further :

etc.

Only when the right hand has become quite familiar with the correct positions both of hand and of fingers by means of the above arpeggio formulae, should the student start upon the following exercises :

etc.

Further, practise this passage with the values in the text, carefully keeping in mind that the semiquaver figure should be carried over from one hand to the other, without there being any audible break of the particular tone pertaining to it.

It will be necessary, before making frequent use of the pedal – such as we recommended for Study N° 3 Op. 10 – to be able to give a perfect impression of legato by the fingers alone. When the student has mastered this, he will add the pedal in the way set down below which, although isolating the melody and lengthening its vibration, allows the secondary melodic design to emerge, distinct and expressive as required.

etc.

Flexibility of the foot will be improved by increasing very gradually the swiftness of the motion; when performing, this use of the pedal will be no more than a regular beat, a kind of uninterrupted quivering.

The fingering of the first half of the seventh bar offers a particular wide-stretch difficulty and – as it is repeated several times in this composition – we advise preparing its execution by the following exercises :

r.h.

r.h.

cresc.

pesante

l.h.

cresc.

cresc.

cantabile

fp

legato

l.h.

p

cresc.

stretto e cresc.

f

poco riten.

smorz.

a Tempo

p

dim.

rall.

sost.

smorz.

STUDY N° 7
(Op. 10)

The student should concentrate on : Development of wide-spaced stretches. Quick motion and agility of the fingers. Lightness of the hand.

Particular difficulties : Precision in the simultaneous attack of double notes; combined suppleness and swiftness of the extension movements of the fingers; perfect connection of the different positions.

First of all, practise the fundamental technique of this Study by means of the following exercises :

N° 1. etc.

to be continued on every degree of the chromatic scale; for the following formula likewise :

N° 1bis etc.

Next, in order to prepare the repeated notes played by the thumb and forefinger and to acquire flexibility of the wrist which will later facilitate the connection of the positions :

N° 2. etc. to be continued chromatically

Then, so that the thumb and forefinger should get accustomed to lose contact of the note played, as little as possible : this being essential to achieve the legato required by Chopin :

N° 3. etc. to be continued chromatically

(slip the thumb on the key lowered by the forefinger but without playing the note again).

This same formula will be next applied to the practice of the whole Study, repeating 5 times each fragment of four bars :

Ex. etc.

After which, employ the following formulae whose object it is to improve the independence and speed of the fingers, or improve the extension and ease of action in passing from one position to another :

N° 4. etc.

N° 5. etc.

Nº 6. simile etc.

Nº 7. simile etc.

The following variant will prove most effective to obtain regularity of the fingers and legato :

Nº 8. etc.

The last passage in semiquavers should be first of all practised thus :

A. etc.

B. etc.

C. etc.

D. etc.

(4th and 5th finger should play with equal strength).

E. etc.

(direct and vigorous attack : wrist and forearm flexible).

The fluid quality and lightness required to interpret this Study will be achieved by reducing to a minimum the motion of the fingers which must not lose touch with the keys, so to speak-though they must remain curved. The wrist should be very flexible, held slightly lower than the hand. The upper voice a trifle more coloured than the thumb and forefinger. The melodic part played unobtrusively – yet perceptibly – by the left hand should be carefully delineated.

Transpose the Study into C slarp major, with the same fingerings.

ALFRED CORTOT

STUDY N° 7
(Op. 10)

Vivace (♩. = 84)

(1 min. 40)

p

sempre legato

p

cresc.

delicato

p

cresc.

(*) If the sustaining pedal is used for the three following bars, be careful to lower it very slightly and to lift it frequently.

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

cresc.

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

* Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

STUDY N° 8

(Op. 10)

The student should concentrate on: Regularity of finger-attack. Lightness and evenness in the passing under of thumb.

Particular difficulties : The exercises that we recommend as preliminary to this Study refer to one of the chief difficulties of pianistics, namely : the passing under of the thumb. Indeed, to master the latter may perhaps be considered as the most essential asset to achieve a fine technique, as it is so constantly in use and also of the greatest importance musically. We therefore believe it advisable to recall the elementary principles of passing the thumb under the other fingers by studying it in scales and arpeggios. This particular movement of the thumb which serves as multiplicator to the other fingers must not impair the evenness of tone in the melodic line of the phrase or run, or modify the position of the fingers in the successive hand-shiftings which result from it, or cause any slackening of speed.

We suggest as suitable the scale-notation hereunder : the upper line indicates the mute position of the fingers on the keys, the lower line the notes to be played. The student should count 4 beats on each note of the scale, making the preparatory movements in strict time and exactly on the beats (or fractions of beats) indicated on the „ mute preparation " stave.

The left hand to be practised in the same manner.

hand-shifting shifting shifting shifting shifting
r.h.
Mute preparation
(A)
Played notes

It will be noticed that, on account of the structure of the hand and its adaptability to the keyboard, the passing under of the thumb calls for a different mechanical process when playing up the keybord or down the keyboard. Its execution is more difficult for the right hand when playing upwards, and for the left hand when playing downwards.

A perfect legato in either case can be obtained by *preparing* the thumb-attack, and also by shifting the hand quickly up (or down) the keyboard, the hand being thus placed immedialely in its former position with the fingers ready to play.

First of all, practise preparing the thumb-attack, thus :

1. r.h. etc. l.h. etc.

See that the thumb is neatly raised and strikes with precision

2. r.h. etc. l.h. etc.

3. r.h. etc. l.h. etc.

4. r.h. etc. l.h. etc.

These four exercices to be continued chromatically in every key.

The thumb should keep very close to the keyboard while passing under the fingers which come between its successive attacks, in order to be as close as possible to the note it has to play. The co-operation of the hand should here be reduced to a minimum, but a slight flexion of the wrist will make the movement easier.

Next, practise shifting the hand :

5. r.h. … etc. l.h. … etc.

in every key, the hand grazing the keys while progressing up or down the keyboard.

After which, practise *with* the thumb which should merely graze the keys and slip at once under the other fingers. Be careful to strike the minims simultaneously.

6. r.h. … etc. l.h. … etc.

Further, for the right hand practise ascending scales and for the left descending scales, successively in every key with the rhythms and different fingerings set down hereunder. This exercise wil lhelp to blend the double movement of preparation and shifting and make it perfectly even. Chromatic scales should be practised in the same manner.

7. r.h. … etc. l.h. … etc.

12 121 1212 12121 121212 1212121 12121212
13 131 1313 13131 131313 1313131 13131313
14 141 1414 14141 141414 1414141 14141414
15 151 1515 15151 151515 1515151 15151515
12 123 1231 12312 123123 1231231 12312312
12 123 1234 12341 123412 1234123 12341234
12 123 1234 12345 123451 1234512 12345123

(For the left hand make use of the fingerings given opposite).

Playing downwards with the right hand, and upwards with the left, the thumb falls *naturally* into position over its proper key (see Ex. A). Consequently, it is by passing the 3rd, 4th and 5th fingers over it that we prepare the shifting of the hand.

Practise first passing the fingers over the thumb, then shifting the hand, in the same manner as above :

8. l.h. r.h. … etc.

9. l.h. r.h. … etc.

10. r.h. l.h. … etc.

11. r.h. … etc. l.h. … etc.

12. r.h. … etc. l.h. … etc.

Then, rhythmical scales, diatonic and chromatic :

13. r.h. etc. l.h. etc.

whith the same fingerings as for exercise N° 7.

The mechanical process of the passing under of the thumb is identical in playing arpeggios, but the flexion of the wrist should be slightly more emphasized than when practising scales, on account of the extension of the fingers which are preparing the next position of the hand.

The left hand should be studied according to the following model, but inversely :

hand-shifting — shifting

Mute preparation

14.

Played notes

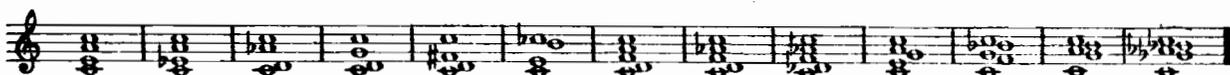
r.h.

Further, practise as explained above for scales, and in every key :

15. r.h. etc. l.h. etc.

Then, with chords of the seventh :

16. r.h. etc. l.h. etc.

Next, with the following chords in every key :

Further, according to the above models in chords :

17. r.h. l.h. etc.

Finally, as above-mentioned for the scales, and making use of the fingerings given in exercise N° 7, to be applied to all arpeggio-figures throughout :

18. etc. etc.

Use the thumb on the black keys both in scales and arpeggios throughout this work. Indeed, the old rule has been discarded by modern technique which prefers fingerings based on the requirements of musical expression rather than those which afford comparative physical convenience.

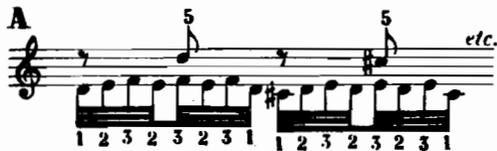
The foregoing exercises having enabled the student to overcome the chief difficulty of this composition, there now remain to be set down a few formulae more especially suited to certain fragments of the Study. For the first thirty-six bars, we recommend the following variant :

r.h. (playing downwards) *l.h.* (playing upwards)

By the repeated motion of the 4th, 3rd and 2nd fingers, the student will obtain equal strength of attack, and this exercise will also enable him, when playing in quick tempo, to avoid slurring the three conjunct notes preceding the thumb.

Bar 37 and similar :

Bar 46 to 53

A **B**

When practising variant **B**, it will be necessary to raise the hand between each group of demisemiquavers with an easy motion in order to get accustomed to attack lightly with the thumb, and at the same time to acquire a flexible wrist-movement by which means a rapid and even execution of the passage will be obtained.

Avoid any exaggerated raising of the fingers which would mar the legato required in playing the figure which runs from Bar 75 to Bar 88. The fingers should be well curved, not allowed to leave the keyboard so to speak, and the hand should be shifted without abruptness.

Practise the same passage, as well as the whole Study, with the following rhythms :

We recommend transposing the Study into F sharp major, with the same fingerings.

ALFRED CORTOT

STUDY N° 8

(Op. 10)

Allegro (𝅗𝅥 = 88)

(2 min 40)

f veloce fz cresc. f

(*) Execute thus :

cresc.

f

fz

(*mp*)

f marcato

f

f *dim.*

cresc. *cresc.*

(*) Here, the pedal should be used in such a way that the vibrations of „ A " in bass may be audible for the space of two bars.

cresc.

cresc. dim. poco rall.

Tempo

pp poco a poco cresc.

f

cresc.
dim.
(p)

sempre legatissimo

sempre legatissimo

p

pp

f

ff

STUDY N° 9

(Op. 10)

The student should concentrate on : Intensity and poetry of the musical diction. Ease and rapidity of left-hand execution. Development of left-hand extension.

Particular difficulties : At first sight, the technical interest afforded by this Study lies in the rapidity and legato playing for the left hand, and to the fact that this must be achieved in spite of extended positions.

Actually this difficulty is but a secondary one, more apparent than real – at any rate for a normal-sized hand – and one which will be easily overcome by practising a few well-considered exercises.

Far more important is the problem pertaining to the general interpretation of the composition, i.e. to its declamation which is at times breathless, at others slow and heavy as if burdened with memories and regret and which calls for a particular quality of tone to colour it.

However, though indeed the student's attention should centre on this constant rise and fall of tempo and dynamics, they are too essentially related to individual emotion and feeling to be analysed in dry aesthetic notes above which the lyricism of music soars high leaving still farther behind scholarly advice.

We shall therefore only suggest a few exercises and principles for „ portamento " playing which are the foundation of a perfect rendering of this Study.

First of all, practise each finger separately :

N° 1.

1 1 1 1 1 etc.
2 2 2 2 2 »
3 3 3 3 3 »
4 4 4 4 4 »
5 5 5 5 5 »

thus :
and

The fingers well curved and firm should press down the keys thoroughly as if to imprint themselves in the keyboard.

Every attack should be followed by a pressure of the hand (hand and fingers as one whole), the weight of which will enable to grade the tone-value. The respective position of fingers and hand should not be altered when playing *f* or *p* – only the weight and a quicker or slower attack being used for increase and decrease of tone.

The wrist should remain flexible so that the hand can be raised with ease above the keyboard after playing each note.

When practising the following exercises, we recommend counting thus : *one* when attacking – *two* when pressing the finger strongly down – *three* when releasing the key and placing the finger on the next key.

The evenness of tone of the different fingers will be obtained by practising scales and arpeggios, in every key with the following finger-combinations :

two fingers	*three fingers*	*four fingers*	*five fingers*
12 12 *etc.*	123 123 *etc.*	1234 1 *etc.*	12345 1 *etc.*
13 13 »	134 134 »	1245 1 »	24135 »
14 14 »	145 145 »	1345 1 »	
15 15 »	234 234 »	2345 2 »	
23 23 »	235 235 »		
24 24 »	245 245 »		
25 25 »	345 345 »		
34 34 »			
35 35 »			
45 45 »			

Three-finger scale

Five-finger arpeggio

The foregoing exercises should be practised in a moderate tempo, alternately

p < f > p and f > p < f.

The following models will gradually prepare the left hand to move with ease and speed in extented positions; at the same time, they will help to develop the mobility of the fingers which serve as pivots to the said positions.

to be played chromatically in every key.

Next, the left hand will be practised in the following variant :

simile

and with the rhythms :

etc.

Repeat twice with each of the rhythms, six times in all, by fragments of four bars.
Bars 27 and 28 should be practised thus :

etc. etc.

In order to obtain an expressive execution of the octaves in the right hand, let the upper note predominate.

ALFRED CORTOT

STUDY Nº 9

(Op. 10)

Allegro molto agitato (♩. = 96)

(2 min.)

p legatissimo

cresc.

con forza

ritard.

cresc.

a Tempo

sotto voce

sempre legatissimo

p

cresc.

f

(1) In the autograph *m s*, every D flat is marked with the ornament we give here at each re-entry of this phrase.

fz p cresc. sempre

stretto e più f accel. cresc.

ff f pp f stretto

pp f appassionato pp f

poco rall. pp a Tempo sempre agitato p sempre legato

con forza

stretto

sempre più

cresc. e accel.

sotto voce

ten.

smorz.

riten.

leggierissimo

smorz.

(2) according to the autograph *m s*.

STUDY N° 10
(Op. 10)

The student should concentrate on : Development of extension. Strength of attack of the 5th finger. Perfecting of chord-playing. Flexibility of the hand and the wrist. Rhythmical independence.

In spite of the fact that the outstanding difficulty of this composition relates to the successive broken chords which form its melodic structure, it is imperative that before undertaking the particular study of the latter, special exercises should be devoted to acquire the individual mobility of each finger.

It is a common mistake when practising said passages in broken chords to use the wrist as principal performing agent. This compels the fingers to press the keys only as far down as the swiftness of the wrist moving along the keyboard will allow; a certain stiffness and compactness of the fingers result, and this impairs both ease of execution and tone value.

We recommend the exercises given hereunder in order to restrict the use of the wrist to its real object i.e., to aid the motion of the fingers by its flexibility, but not to command them.

First, practise the movement of thumb and forefinger thus :

r.h.

Repeat by fragments of four bars, each one 5 times, with the following rhythms :

Then, prepare the firmness of attack of the sixths :

A. r.h. etc.

B. r.h. etc.

Further, to obtain equal strength of thumb and 5th finger :

A. etc. B. etc.

C. etc.

Next, in order to develop stretch and dexterity of the fingers, practise, again by fragments of four bars, the following formulae – taking care to hold the upper notes (insofar as the stretch of the hand allows) :

And, finally, the variants hereunder :

(the semiquavers of the nine first variants should be practised alternately legato and staccato – the crotchets being considered throughout the exercise as held notes.)

We recommend the sixteen formulae given above for practising the left hand. The following fingerings should be used alternately : or

The melodic accents of thumb and 5th finger marked by Chopin must be strictly observed when performing, but in no way should they be allowed to impede the impulse and the aerial flight of the figure.

The same remark applies to the staccato of Bars 13 – 14 – 15 and 16 whose lightness and precision must be practised as follows :

The sixteen models above-mentioned are not suitable for Bars 43 to 48, nor for the two bars preceding the last, as the piano-writing is different; the said bars should be practised thus :

A. etc. B. etc.

C. etc. D. etc.

these exercises to be played on chromatically.

Next, as they are written, with the rhythms :

Preliminary exercise for practising the bar last but one :

ten.

The following figure for the left hand will help to avoid abruptness of attack or heaviness of the thumb and the forefinger :

l.h. etc.

Semiquavers should be played alternately legato and staccato.

ALFRED CORTOT

p

Ped. * Ped. *

cresc.

cresc.

f *sf*

sf

cresc.

(1) Same remark as P. 69 — we recommend „ D natural ".

sempre legatissimo

fz

leggierissimo e dim.

dolcissimo

rall.

a Tempo

p

cresc

STUDY N° 11
(Op. 10)

The student should concentrate on : Development of extension. Singing tone of the upper notes in the right hand. Ease and lightness of execution.

In order to perform this Study with the required expression, it is necessary to suppose it has been written as follows :

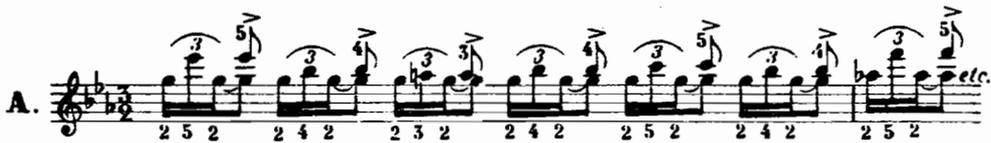
etc.

The tone of the upper melodic line in the right hand must pre-dominate throughout, except during the lapse of a few bars when it yields its prevalence to the inner part.

On the contrary, one should avoid giving too great emphasis to the thumb of the left hand. Indeed, the melodic figure which it has to play is of less harmonic consequence than that of the bass.

Therefore, as regards the right hand, the preparatory technical practice will consist in obtaining a light attack of the lower fingers, in developing their rapidity of execution in wide-spread positions, in increasing the strength and balance of the upper fingers, – as it is they who play the expressive part.

First, practise the following variant :

A. etc.

which will be modified further, as follows :

A bis etc.

Practise the Study throughout by fragments of eight bars according to the two figures above :
Then :

B. etc.

The accent should be made with the finger only, the hand remaining motionless.
Further :

C. ten. etc.

Raise the fingers with utmost precision, the fingers and the hand very steady, the wrist flexible.
The four-note chords should be practised in the following manner :

or

(examples borrowed from Bar 3).

If such wide-stretches with held notes prove too fatiguing, do not insist but replace above-mentioned formula by the following :

D. 1 2 5 2 5 1 2 4 2 4 etc.

The exercise in four-note chords will be replaced by the following :

etc.

Formula **D** should of course be adopted as well, even if the conformation of the hand admits of practising according to formula **C**.

In order to develop extension and suppleness of the wrist, we recommend as excellent the following variant :

E. r.h. etc.

To the latter exercise may be applied most of the rhythmical variants – and others – set down for Study No 1 Op. 10 : we recommend to practise all the chord combinations of this Study in the same manner.

For the left hand, first practise thus :

etc. then ten. etc. ten. etc.

next, the adaptation of formula **D**.

It is needless to say that when performing there should be perfect coincidence of the arpeggios in both hands, and that when one hand is playing four notes while the other is playing but three, the final notes in each hand should be heard together.

(1) Bars **25-27-29-30-31-44-46** should be played in such a way as to emphasize the inner part of the right hand.

Ex. etc.

(2) Preliminary exercises :

r.h. 2 5 3 5 2 5 1 2 1 3 1 2

same formulae for the left hand.

Only by practising most carefully the foregoing exercises will the student be able to achieve a perfect and truly musical execution of this Study. Fantasy of expression, a flowing melodic line, an elegant and harmonious sequence of chords are the qualities that give this Study its individual character, and they can only be attained by the mastery of the special technical problems contained in it.

To complete the exercises set down for this Study, we advise in order to acquire extra flexibility and ease in the quick succession of wide-spread positions, the following models which should be transposed into every key :

1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 etc.

gradually quickening the tempo.

STUDY Nº 11
(Op. 10)

Allegretto (♩ = 76)

(2 min.)

fz *p* *cresc.* *cresc.* *fz* *cresc.* *cresc.*

Ped. ✻ Ped. ✻ Ped. ✻ Ped. ✻ Ped. ✻ Ped. ✻

N. B. The pedal is marked only where it should cover a series of chords ; wherever it is not marked, it should be changed on each chord.

poco stringendo e cresc.

rit.

smorz.

(*) Variant marked by Chopin:

STUDY N° 12

(Op. 10)

To enlarge upon pianoforte technique when referring to a composition which is an exalted outcry of revoit – to set down fingerings for pages wherein the emotions of a whole race of people are alive and throbbing – to compose practical exercises for music pregnant with the mysterious and terrible force of genius, may appear an odd misunderstanding of the deep inner meaning of this Study and a dull appreciation indeed of the pathetic and exalted element which composes its particular essence.

Nevertheless, the throbbing, the sweep and the marked vigour which run through its pages will only be truthfully rendered by the performer who has overcome the difficulties and who can completely ignore the numerous technical obstacles which lie between him and the feelings he must express.

Consequently, the study of compositions similar to this one should be approached with an unassuming and respectful attitude which are in themselves the proof of that comprehension which lends dignity and nobleness to virtuosity though the latter is subjected to interpretation. One should not therefore – before having mastered the material points – launch into performance aided only by summary indications, extempore dynamics and an abusive use of the pedal. One should, on the contrary, endeavour above all to acquire by long, patient and searching labour the strength of the fingers, the evenness of playing, the fine quality of tone which will ultimately be the helpmeets of musical thought.

When this necessary task has been fulfilled, then, and only then, may the performer prove that he is gifted with genius, imagination, or simply with talent : Chopin lays before him the opportunity to do so.

First of all, full attention should be given to the left hand's technical part by practising separately the few essential figures which form its melodic outline.

1° The initial figure :

etc.

First, practise chromatically, downwards and upwards for the space of one octave, the following exercise, in minor thirds :

l.h. ten. ten. ten. etc.

Then, in major thirds :

l.h. ten. ten. ten. etc.

gradually lengthening the shake and quickening the tempo, but all the while with a ternary rhythm.

Further, transpose the successions hereunder into every key :

l.h. ten. ten. etc. ten. ten. etc.

and etc.

Finally, practise the passge as it is written with the following rhythms :

which should be used for exercising the left hand throughout the Study.

N.B. When performing, great care should be taken that the accent of the forefinger on each beat does not slacken the tempestuous sweep of these opening bars, but nevertheless that the rhythm should be vigorously marked.

However, it must be observed that Chopin's fingerings do not permit certain virtuosi to give this proper accent without the help of a pressure of the hand which impairs the evenness of playing and impedes its vehemence. This problem pertains to manual conformation; it can be solved by practising the exercises mentioned above.

Should the student, in spite of sedulous and patient practice, and not from discouragement at the slowness of his progress, find himself unable to achieve the vigour and swiftness required in this passage, he may adopt the following fingering – which affords excellent legato practice – even if he does not make use of it when performing.

l.h. etc.

2º The arpeggio figures similar to those of Bar 9 :

etc.

First, practise chromatically in every key :

A ten. B ten.

with the rhythms mentioned above.

The following fingering will help to make the crescendo more eloquently :

to be played chromatically in every key.

3º Bars 15 and 16, which should be prepared by the following exercises :

etc.

and etc.

then etc.

4º The chromatic figure of Bars 17, 74 and 75, for which the evenness required will be obtained by the preparatory exercises hereunder :

major thirds — play on chromatically — idem

minor thirds — etc.

seconds — etc.

5º Bars 25 and 26.

etc.

6º Bar 28. See preparatory exercises set down for Study Nº 4 Op. 10.

7º Bars 29, 30, 31 and 32.

Evenness and strength of the fingers will be obtained by practising the progression of positions in the following manner .

First, without the thumb.

play on chromatically with the same fingerings.

then :

etc.

and finally :

etc. and etc.

As regards the figure beginning Bars 29 and 31, the use of this fingering : will ensure a more vigorous attack than this one : : however, as in the case of the modification already mentioned, the former fingering should be used only when the regular fingering has been carefully practised.

The student having mastered the difficulties of these various passages should connect the latter into fragments repeatedly longer, until the left hand part throughout the Study has acquired such vitality and such eloquence that it can stand alone – without the addition of the right hand – as a composition possessing a musical interest of its own.

In order to achieve this, the student should make use of the rhythms set down above.

To complete the practise of the left hand, the exercises relating to Study Nº 8 Op. 10 will be found most suitable here.

It is on the noble and vehement diction of the right hand that depend the beauty and the thrilling pathos of this Study.

Considered from a purely technical point of view, its execution offers no considerable difficulties. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to believe that one could dispense with carefully preparing its perfect interpretation. The student is too often prone to be somewhat careless of figures such as octave or chord successions of expressive quality, or of figures comparatively easy to play to which he does not give as full attention as to other passages demanding either greater velocity or hasardous displacements. This neglect explains why we meet, in many a performance, with such like dross as „ *pianos* " played too „ *piano* ", colourless, lifeless, toneless and bereft of vibrations – or with „ *fortes* " agressively hard as if smashed under too abrupt an attack.

It is needless to say that the broadness and richness of tone necessary to the pathetic and thrilling declamation of this Study does not permit of its performance being marred by flaws of this kind.

The preparatory work will therefore consist in acquiring the rich tone-value required for a fine execution of these octaves and chords, through a careful study of the following principles and exercises.

First of all, repeat slowly the same octave, grading the tone from *pp* to *ff* and from *ff* to *pp*.

Ex. 1

The thumb and 5th finger should form with the hand a kind of arc of which the latter is the centre and whose span remains the same, *even when the hand leaves the keyboard to move from one octave to the following.*

The fingers which are not playing should be grouped and raised in such a way that they may form with the back of the hand a level line extending to the second phalange.

The tips of the fingers should be slightly curved inwards, as much to avoid involuntary attack of intervening notes, as to steady their position and that of the hand which ought to be firmly maintained, *whatever the dynamics.*

By practising in this way, the forearm prolongs the line of the hand at the moment of striking and contributes by its weight to the grading of the dynamics. The wrist should remain flexible.

During the pauses, the forearm should be raised at the same time as the hand. Avoid turning back the hand when it leaves the keyboard : on the contrary, let it hang a trifle forwards by help of a slight flexion of the wrist, but steadily maintaining the position and stretch of the fingers.

Be careful never to quicken the tempo during this exercise. Count *two* beats for each minim, and *two* for each minim-rest.

Next, practise diatonic and chromatic scales as well as arpeggios and octaves, in every key and in the same manner, i.e., using exclusively the thumb and 5th finger, and with the following dynamics : *pp* to *ff* – and vice-versa, observing a rest between every octave.

Ex. 2
arpeggios

Listen attentively to the tone produced, and gradually quicken the tempo. Practise each hand separately, as of course, these same exercises apply to the left hand as well.

The expressive value and timbre of the octaves is often richer when emphasis is laid on the vibration of the upper part (the lower part for the left hand). Such is the case in this Study.

In order to develop the strength of the 5th finger, practise the scales and arpeggios in the following manner :

r.h. Ex. scales — *etc.* — *l.h.* Ex. arpeggios — *etc.*

The 5th finger plays alone, the thumb only touching the key without pressing it down. The fingers should be kept firm throughout as above-mentioned, and the same dynamics should be used.

The same rules concerning the position of the hand given in Ex. 1, apply to the octaves played with thumb and 4th finger – except that here the 5th finger, instead of being raised and curved with the fingers which are not active, should retain almost the same position as when it was playing.

Practise all the foregoing exercises with this fingering.

Then, combine the two fingerings, practising with both hands, thus :

r.h. — *l.h.* — *etc.*

Endeavour to balance perfectly the tone of the successive octaves, and with dynamics.

Next, practise the right hand part throughout the Study with the rhythms and the dynamics as they are marked, but playing only the octaves (i.e., leaving out the inner notes which complete the chords). Practise in this manner from Bar 10 to Bar 45, and from Bar 50 to Bar 69 (*).

Before going on to the final study of the said passages as they are written, we recommend practising preliminary exercises relating to the preparation of the fingers before striking the chords, which is an essential condition to ensure their firmness of execution and fullness of tone.

The student may find profit in practising after the following model, which can be applied to scales and arpeggios in every key :

(The notes printed in small type mark the mute preparation of the chords) play on chromatically

Count *one* on each of the minim chords, *two* to deepen the pressure on the keys, *three* to raise the forearm and hand, *four* to prepare mutely the following chord – the hand remaining above the keyboard. Be careful to strike directly, with fingers firm and playing strictly together.

ALFRED CORTOT

(*) We wish to mention that the object of the above-mentioned exercises is to achieve a fine execution of one special composition, and not to serve as a general rule to be followed for playing octaves. For a more complete study of the latter, we refer the student to the analysis of Studies Nº 9 and 10 Op. 25.

STUDY N° 12
(Op. 10)

Allegro con fuoco (♩ = 160)

(2 min. 50)

f legatissimo

ff f con fuoco

cresc.

ten.

con fuoco

dim.

p cresc.

ten. fz cresc.

Ped. * Ped. *

stretto sf (A)

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

cresc.

(A) In certain editions : etc., probably in accordance with Chopin's execution.

ff

Ped. * Ped. *

ff

Ped. * Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

ff

Ped. come primo

f

sf ff

ten.

(B)

(C)

cresc.

(B) Execute thus :

(C) From here to 2nd beat of the next bar, use the pedal on each quaver

f

fz

dim.

p

una corda

smorz.

sotto voce

pp

poco rall.

Tempo

appassionato

ff

ff pesante

Ped.